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New Patent Appln. (Daniel MONGET et al.)
PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

PATENT

- adding into the receptacle at least one sterile, inert, solid support,
- incubating at a suitable temperature, and
- observing the variation in at least one characteristic related to the presence of the microorganism(s) to be detected in said receptacle.

13. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said solid support is added to said receptacle in such a quantity as to obtain a layer of material having a surface area approximately equivalent to that of an interface between the sample and a gaseous atmosphere in the receptacle.

14. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said characteristic comprises a variation in at least one chemical indicator added into the receptacle before incubation and/or a variation in at least one physicochemical or electrical parameter.

15. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein said chemical indicator comprises a colored or fluorescent indicator.

16. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein said physicochemical or electrical parameter is at least one member selected from the group

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consisting of CO₂ production, pressure, turbidity, oxidation/
reduction potential and pH.

17. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said sample is a biological sample selected from the group consisting of blood, cerebrospinal fluid, pleural fluid and urine, or said sample is a non-biological sample selected from the group consisting of water, food products, and pharmaceutical products.

18. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said receptacle has transparent walls, and said variation is observed optically through all or part of at least one of said walls.

19. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein change in said physicochemical or electrical parameter is detected by at least one physicochemical or electrical sensor.

20. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said sterile, inert, solid support is made of a natural material.

21. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein said natural material is at least one member selected from the group consisting of silica beads, glass beads, quartz particles, grains of sand, vermiculite,

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zeolite, feldspar particles, glass wool, rock wool, clay beads, and cork fragments.

22. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein said sterile, inert, solid support is made of an artificial material.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein said artificial material is at least one member selected from the group consisting of polystyrene beads, polyethylene beads, polypropylene beads, clusters of small polyethylene beads, with variable pore size and dimensions, growth supports in the form of small beads used in tissue culture, latex beads, gelatin-coated beads, and resin beads.

24. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the sterile, inert, solid support comprises an element of any shape made of polyethylene.

25. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the support consists of beads or particles having a diameter of between 1 μ m and 10 mm.

26. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein said diameter is between 0.1 mm and 5 mm.